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EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES BASED ON CHILD SURVIVOR VIDEO TESTIMONIES AT YAD LAYELED CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL MUSEUM/ GHETTO FIGHTERS' HOUSE ISRAEL

Yad LaYeled Children's Memorial Museum, established in 1995, is a Holocaust educational-memorial museum geared to the education of children aged between 10 and 14. The museum is on the *Ghetto Fighters' Kibbutz* in Israel, along with the first Holocaust museum, the *Ghetto Fighters' House*, established in 1949. Yad LaYeled is dedicated to creating a collective memory of the Holocaust through its exhibitions, architecture and educational programmes, transmitting the legacy of the Holocaust to the young through a meaningful experience at the museum. Its design, exhibitions and educational goals are based on a number of core principles:

- 1. The Holocaust is presented through the stories of Jewish children who lived during that period, rather than highlighting the traumatic experience of death.
- 2. The museum presents these stories through authentic materials, such as diaries, testimonies, artefacts and photographs, that are age appropriate and emphasise the lives of Jewish children during the Holocaust. Authenticity is key to preventing a nostalgic, superficial or stereotypical understanding of the Holocaust (Totten 2001).
- 3. As young children cannot grasp historical complexities, exhibitions include immersive representations – simulacrum installations +1. This creates a more experiential visit, sparking the imagination and the curiosity of the young visitor. The simulacrum installations, along with diverse testimonies of child survivors work together to construct a general

narrative with a clear beginning (life before the war), middle (life during the war) and end (after the war). Yad LaYeled's educational philosophy focuses on the young learner and his/her needs and abilities. The museum's pedagogic method is based on a constructivist educational theory and performative strategies (Brooks, M.G./ Brooks, J.G. 1993; Brooks, J.G./ Brooks M.G. 1999; Hein 2006; Messham-Muir 2004). According to George Hein (2006), the constructivist museum and its exhibitions are structured to give school-age visitors a more personal meaning-making learning experience.

Yad LaYeled uses exhibitions and educational activities to help young visitors build personal knowledge and meanings, and draw their own conclusions. The core exhibition is designed to allow students to reach their own interpretation rather than having things explained by a guide. The students are given a question and then explore in small groups, looking for answers. In order to engage young visitors on both an affective and a cognitive level, many museum educators focus on the emotional to provide a meaningful experience. The impact these moving experiences can have on young visitors in Holocaust museums needs to be taken into consideration. Therefore, the main challenge for Yad LaYeled and Holocaust educators in general is to create programmes that encourage young visitors to empathise – but not at the expense of authenticity and a nuanced and complex understanding of historical events (Salmons 2001).

In sum, Yad LaYeled provides a venue where elementary and middle school students can explore the subject of the Holocaust in an age appropriate manner, and foster empathy and expand their knowledge about the world of Jewish children who lived during the Holocaust. The goal is to expose young visitors to the complexity of the Holocaust through the life stories of these children, and to encourage them to ask relevant and moral questions, and be motivated to learn more, both in the classroom and independently.

## The Integration of Video Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors in Yad LaYeled's Exhibitions

Video testimonies of Holocaust child survivors are an integral part of the museum's permanent and rotating exhibitions, because we believe that first-hand accounts contribute to the collective memory of the Holocaust. The testimonies of grown-up child survivors present both personal and subjective stories of their experiences during the Holocaust. The personal testimony of adult survivors is one of the ways for young visitors to construct their own interpretation and meaning. Watching first-hand testimonies also contributes to the construction and preservation of the collective memory of the Holocaust (Assmann 2006; Suleiman 2002). The museum has two permanent exhibitions that include video testimony of child survivors. In the core exhibition, *The Jewish Child during the Holocaust*, the visitor walks along a path with 3D immersive simulacrum installations, authentic lifesize photographs and artefacts from the world of children. Multi-media installations are an integral part of the exhibition. They include audio and video testimonies and fragments of original documentary film. The video testimonies in the core exhibition are all from grown-up child survivors. Using authentic testimony from an adult is a reminder that the story being told is a memory of the past. The first-hand accounts give agency to the survivor's story in his/her own words, which become empowering texts for young visitors. As the focus of the core exhibition is on life, the encounter with the personal testimony of one child, learning about his/her personal world, family, hobbies, and the ways he/she adopted in order to cope, invites the young visitors to expand their knowledge about the world of the children who lived during the Holocaust. Each video testimony reveals the story of one child and his/her specific situation. They are strategically located in six themed alcoves and help create the historical narrative of the exhibition (outbreak of war and becoming a refugee, life in the ghetto, going into hiding, life in camps and arrival in Israel). The testimonies illuminate different aspects of each survivor's personal experiences as a child during the Holocaust, such as living under a false identity, going to an underground school in the ghetto or hiding in the barn of a Christian family. Placing the testimonies in a thematic simulacrum like a hiding place gives young visitors an opportunity to connect more intimately to the story visually and physically, as well as emotionally and cognitively, without trying to immerse them in a simulated experience. The second permanent exhibition deals with Janusz Korczak. Using five installations in a theatre-in-the-round in the centre of the museum, the designers present Korczak's legacy, evoking universal moral, educational and philosophical questions in an ongoing dialogue. *Unlike the testimonies in The Jewish Child during the Holocaust*, young actors playing the survivors as children are used in the film to present their story as if they are being interviewed in the orphanage.

Yad LaYeled also has gallery space for temporary exhibitions. Video testimonies are incorporated into these exhibitions in a more conventional manner using plasma screens on the walls, and various workshop activities have been developed based on the content of the exhibitions and the testimonies. The temporary exhibition Here Began My Childhood deals with the life of Jewish orphans after liberation and their preparation to "make Aliyah" (Hebrew for Jewish immigration to Israel). The video testimonies include child survivors and adult survivors who cared for Jewish orphans after the war. The temporary exhibition My Home There includes art works from the archives of the Ghetto Fighters' House. The exhibition deals with the concepts "home" and "family" before, during and after the war through the medium of art. Video testimonies of the child Holocaust survivors who became the artists whose work is displayed in the exhibition are screened in a workshop activity. These testimonies are currently not on display in the exhibition. It is planned to integrate them through an augmented reality application on an iPad or smartphone. Paul Kor – Memories and Artworks is a monographic exhibition in our art workshop about a multi-talented Holocaust child survivor who became a famous Israeli graphic designer and author of children's books. His testimony being used in a workshop for school students.

## What We Have Learned about Child Survivor Video Testimony

Although child survivor testimonies were always an integral part of Yad LaYeled, 10 years ago we decided to re-evaluate the testimonies in the core exhibition. We made a number of changes, including introducing new testimonies, examining each testimony's placement in the exhibition and searching for ways to add additional testimonies in a confined space. One of the first things we did was to take out testimonies from survivors who had passed away. When the museum first opened, young visitors were encouraged to write to the survivors, which became difficult as survivors died or became unable to respond to letters. Therefore, we looked for child survivors who were willing to be interviewed and filmed, keeping in line with the core themes and the installations in which we would be screening these testimonies. We also looked at where testimonies were being screened and relocated some. Some testimonies were also edited and shortened from eight or nine minutes to five or six, because we noticed that children rarely sat for more than five minutes. We also wanted to have more than one testimony in each installation, and shorter clips would allow visitors to explore more testimonies in the time. One of the major changes was the re-evaluation of how survivors were interviewed. We replaced the studio-based blue background with a more natural setting. One of our staff interviews survivors and edits the testimony. All the new testimonies in the core exhibition were recorded at the survivor's home – with the understanding that this provided a human connection for visitors. New technology has allowed us to add additional testimonies in screening areas. This compensates for the limitations of the museum space and the installations created to house the original testimonies. We have tripled the number of testimonies in the core exhibition, with two or three in each installation (instead of one), and five in the Eternal Flame Hall, which is the last section of the exhibition. Altogether, 18 testimonies are screened throughout the main exhibition. Adding the ability to control each viewing was another important change. Visitors can now press a button to restart a testimony from the beginning, and choose which clip they want to see, and whether with Hebrew or English subtitles.

## Educational Programmes Based on Child Survivor Testimony

Our vision is for child survivor testimonies to be part of a holistic educational programme at Yad LaYeled. |2 Even so, watching a clip is not enough to create meaningful and deep insights about the lives of Jewish children during the Holocaust or evoke relevant moral questions. Incorporating child survivor testimony into a workshop or a play are two ways the museum can expand young visitors' knowledge and develop empathy.

#### Workshop activities

The goal of all the workshops in Yad LaYeled, which include art, music, creative writing and drama, is to give the young visitor an opportunity to process and express his/her feelings in an engaging and thought-provoking manner as part of the museum learning experience (Weiser 2001). The museum's educational staff have developed a number of activities that focus on child survivor testimonies. These allow children to learn more about a specific child survivor by introducing a more tangible and experiential interaction with their story.

#### Plays

Yad LaYeled has written, produced and directed a number of plays and monologues. Many are based on survivor testimonies from our core exhibition, *The Jewish Child during the Holocaust*. Educational programmes incorporating theatre have become an integral part of the learning process in Yad LaYeled and have significantly contributed to our pedagogical approach of building a meaningful learning experience about the Holocaust. When preparing a play, we once again rely on the authentic story, based on the survivor's testimony, as well as pictures, artefacts, autobiographies and memoirs. These theatre-based activities allow the museum to broaden the context of the testimony and help young visitors make connections, explore concepts and express their feelings. Research has shown that integrating theatre into the museum's educational programme can enhance the learning experience, and contribute to empathetic understanding of the dilemmas and difficult

situations presented in the museum space. Plays bring an experience-based approach to learning, including dialogue and imagination (Hughes 1998; Bridal 2004). One example is Dance of Joy and Sorrow, which has been presented for more than 10 years at Yad LaYeled. The play is based on a book by Lea Fried (2015), a child survivor who lived in a monastery for three years during the war. Her testimony is presented in a section of the main exhibition, The Jewish Child during the Holocaust, dealing with children in hiding. The play presents details referred to in the video testimony, but also adds new information from the book, filling in knowledge gaps and evoking further insights about Lea's life. During the performance, an actress plays Lea as an adult (as she appears in her testimony) and as a young girl, allowing the audience to see her experience through a child's eye. Afterwards, there is a discussion about Lea's personal story, the difficulties she faced and how she dealt with them. The play and the discussion contribute to a more empathetic and complex understanding of Lea's experiences as a child in hiding, such being separated from her parents, learning to pretend that she is Christian and dealing with the cruel treatment of the Mother Superior at the monastery.

Both the workshop activities and the plays based on child survivor testimonies enrich the museum experience. They are part of a multi-disciplinary pedagogy that presents the story of the Jewish children during the Holocaust through different media, but is always anchored on the authentic video testimony of the child survivor.

## Assessment Model for Integrating Video Testimonies in Yad LaYeled's Museum Space

After re-evaluating the integration of child survivor testimony in the core exhibition, we decided to do a meta-analysis of our educational activities, such as workshops. The educational staff wanted to see if criteria could be identified for interviewing a child survivor, integrating a testimony into the museum space and using testimony as part of a workshop or theatrical activity. We also wanted to evaluate present educational activities in search of the criteria for best practices. In 2016, the educational staff developed a triangular model (see Appendix 1) with a dynamic and fluid interaction between three vertices: core principles (details in Appendix 2), child testimony and learning activity. Each of the three vertices can serve as a starting point for developing a holistic museum learning experience. This model also leads to the evaluation process the educational staff at Yad LaYeled created. Using evaluation tools helps us continuously examine the role of child survivor testimonies in the museum space and educational programmes, and develop activities that integrate survivors' personal experiences beyond the exhibition space. The dynamic interaction between the three vertices of the triangle will be more effective if we can find a profound common denominator between the core principle, the testimony and the learning activity. To discover this common denominator, we defined four dimensions and criteria for evaluating the video testimony:

- content
- media structure and design
- incorporation in the museum space that makes it accessible to the audience and the broader connection of the testimony
- relevance to the lives of young visitors

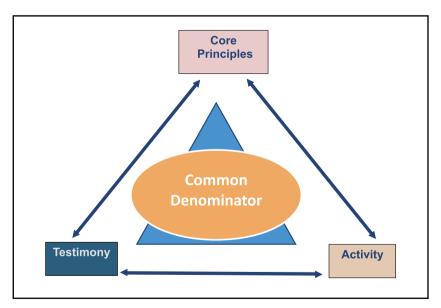
Each dimension includes various criteria that indicate different aspects of that dimension (see Appendix 2). Lea Fried's testimony is a good example of how a common denominator can be found. The *content* of Lea's testimony deals with her life in a monastery and living under a false identity. The *structure and design* of the thematic installation, a church, in which the testimony is presented, puts Lea's story in context. The *broader connection* to Lea's story is available through the play, The Dance of Joy and Sorrow, in which more details of Lea's life before, during and after living in the monastery are revealed. Finally, the focus of Lea's story – her identity – is *a subject relevant* to young visitors and can be a catalyst for a deeper discussion on what one's identity is and what can happen if someone is denied the right to those characteristics vital to their identity. The common denominator is identity. The post-play discussion revolves around identity during the Holocaust – when many children had to hide their Jewish identity or take on a

false identity – as well as how we perceive identity today. Defining a common denominator through an evaluation process based on assessment indicators helps the museum choose and integrate video testimony in exhibitions and educational programmes. Finding this common denominator is an important part of the process of developing the rationale and goals of our educational programmes. We can also evaluate whether specific common denominators are relevant to our young visitors and revise any of the vertices in the triangular model. The optimal choice of testimonies helps provide young visitors an opportunity to experience a more profound understandig of Jewish children's lives during the Holocaust and how this can be relevant to their lives today.

### Conclusion

Holocaust educators in the 21st century have come to realise that museums are not just spaces for creating collective and personal memories but also educational institutions. The challenge is being able to develop exhibitions and educational activities that evoke affective and cognitive experiences, while trying not to be spectacular, traumatic or trivial. Video testimonies of child survivors play a valuable role in Yad LaYeled's educational programme, giving our young visitors a personal and human connection to the history of the Holocaust. These stories bring a message of survival and the building of a new life after the war. They also facilitate young visitors' empathetic attitude to the story of Jewish children during the Holocaust. Therefore, an assessment-based method for choosing the most appropriate video testimony is an essential tool for creating a meaningful visiting experience. Lea Fried's story demonstrates how the educational staff at Yad LaYeled can develop an educational programme to enhance and broaden a child survivor's testimony. With a holistic and constructivist pedagogical approach that focuses on our young visitors and their learning experience, Yad LaYeled is looking for new ways to make child survivor video testimony accessible and engaging, as well as meaningful and relevant to their personal and collective memory of the Holocaust. As we face a future without survivors who can give live testimony, it is imperative that Holocaust educators in general – and those who work at Holocaust museums in particular – continue to incorporate videotaped survivor testimony in their educational programmes. This may include using interactive technology that allows us to add more information about the survivors alongside the testimony. Replacing the conventional worksheet with a tablet may also be a way to connect young visitors to survivor testimonies through a medium that is more familiar to them.

Appendix 1 Circular Triangular Model For Integrating Child Survivor Testimony In Educational Programmes at Yad LaYeled



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### Appendix 2

Criteria for Incorporating Child Survivor Video Testimony in Yad LaYeled Museum

Dimension	Criteria	Core Principles
Content	Video testimony of Holocaust survivors is a <b>central component</b> of the <b>core exhibition</b> and in the development of <b>educational</b> <b>programmes</b> based on the personal story of a survivor	The testimonies will be a source for the legacy of the Holocaust for future generations
Content	Focus is on <b>one survivor's</b> personal story of coping, survival and rescue	Personal, subjective expression in which the experiences of survivors who were children during the Holocaust can most memorably be communicated Emphasis is placed on the lives of children and their active place as subject and not object Video testimonies are not only testimonies of the collective Holocaust, they present a particular, individual and unique story Video testimony gives the survivor a right to their own individual memories,
		including the years before the Holocaust as well as those following it The focus is on the life of one survivor and <b>multiple stories</b> to show the complexity of Jewish children's lives during the Holocaust
Content	<b>An adult</b> (authentic/actor) who is a Holocaust survivor tells the story of his/her <b>childhood</b>	The testimony transmits a <b>message of</b> survival and a continuation of life A direct <b>multi-generational</b> connection with survivors who live among us, but not for muchlonger Augments the main narrative and humanises the victim/survivor Transition of memory through the personal memory of the survivor – how was the Holocaust experienced, how is it remembered and how is it passed on?
Content	The story does <b>not have</b> <b>traumatic</b> detail The story stimulates <b>empathy</b> but does not exaggerate feelings or lead to suggestion or overidentification	The survivor's story should <b>not</b> be presented in a sensational or traumatic manner, nor should it be trivialised

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Dimension	Criteria	Core Principles
Content	The testimony provides an opportunity to transfer the story from the past to the <b>relevant experiences</b> of the target audience – to the present existential questions	The best way to make the story <b>relevant</b> to today's children is to offer testimonies involving <b>situations</b> with which they are familiar (separation, isolation, rejection, loss of family or someone dear to them
Content	<b>Few reminders</b> of historical dates and events	The young visitor cannot process complex <b>historical facts</b>
Content	The testimony raises <b>questions</b> but does not always provide clear <b>answers</b>	The partial testimony <b>encourages</b> visitors <b>to wonder</b> "what happened next?" based on various associations: age of child, gender, country, period of time, etc
Content	The testimony has <b>explicit</b> content but also hints of <b>implied</b> content that add knowledge about the time and raise questions	It is important to present the young visitor with <b>rich and multi-layered</b> <b>story</b> content
Content	The testimony is in <b>Hebrew</b> reflecting <b>a Zionist theme</b> : the survivor emigrates to Israel and makes his/her home there	There is a <b>Zionist narrative</b> that connects the young visitor to the history of the Jewish people in the Diaspora and Israel
Content	The content of the testimony encourages the young viewer's imagination: a combination of ambiguity and certainty, movement between historical facts and imagination	Imagination allows <b>transference of</b> <b>memory</b> , a connection to the past and to commemoration in an era in which there are progressively fewer survivors
Content	The testimonies are from a wide range of survivors, who represent different age groups, countries and life experiences during the Holocaust	The <b>diversity of testimonies</b> is appropriate for a <b>wide range of</b> <b>audiences</b> and reflects the complexity of the Holocaust
Media – structure and design	The survivor is taped and presented at <b>eye level</b>	The eye contact <b>humanises the</b> <b>history of the Holocaust</b> with emphasis on the <b>personal story</b>
Media – structure and design	The survivor is <b>centre frame</b> and does not change his/her position	Video offers the opportunity to
Media – structure and design	The survivor is shown in his <b>home</b>	archive survivor testimony
Media – structure and design	<b>Subtitles</b> in Hebrew and in English	There are <b>multiple ways to connect</b> to the testimony – audio, visual or a combination of both Accessibility for local and foreign visitors
Media – structure and design	Use of <b>supporting information</b> from pictures or artefacts	Video provides ways to <b>augment</b> a survivor's testimony

Dimension	Criteria	Core Principles
Media – structure and design	A videotaped testimony mediates between <b>direct</b> <b>memory and representative</b> <b>memory</b>	Video testimony <b>documents the</b> <b>historical</b> event through a subjective and particular witness
Media – structure and design	The nature of the video testimony influences the transference of a message and a story	Video testimonies record a <b>direct</b> encounter The audio-visual recording presents how the survivor felt and what he has experienced in his/her own words and from his/her perspective, presenting an <b>affective and imaginative</b> engagement with the viewers
Incorporating testimonies in the museum space and making them accessible to the targeted audience	The testimony is integrated in a way that makes a connection between the particular content and the broader content of the exhibition to which it is connected, broadening the range of meanings the young visitor can construct	The museum experience is <b>multi- sensory</b> and composed of <b>different</b> <b>components</b> that together construct the <b>master narrative</b> Incorporating the testimonies in different spaces throughout the museum allows <b>flexibility and a</b> <b>balance</b> between the museum space, the master narrative and the specific testimony
Incorporating testimonies in the museum space and making them accessible to the targeted audience	The video testimonies are connected to the <b>audio</b> <b>testimonies</b> that are in the same area of the exhibition	Testimonies are one component in <b>a</b> <b>multimedia environment</b>
Incorporating testimonies in the museum space and making them accessible to the targeted audience	There is an <b>interrelationship</b> between the video testimonies and the museum space in which they are screened (open/closed/ design of the seating area)	The <b>"as if" environment</b> in which the testimony is presented allows a more <b>tactile space</b> , which serves as a medium between the visitor and the personal story
Incorporating testimonies in the museum space and making them accessible to the targeted audience	There are <b>various sitting/</b> <b>standing</b> designs in the areas in which testimonies are screened	The <b>enclosure</b> of the testimony provides a more <b>intimate and person-</b> <b>to-person</b> connection between visitor and survivor
Incorporating testimonies in the museum space and making them accessible to the targeted audience	Is the young visitor <b>passive</b> when watching the testimony or does he/she have the option to be <b>interactive</b> – applications, barcode, game – allowing involvement in the development of the story?	The use of <b>technological aids</b> and teleprocessing can bring young visitors closer to the subject of the Holocaust, enrich the visitor experience and encourage meaningful learning

Dimension	Criteria	Core Principles
Incorporating testimonies in the museum space and making them accessible to the targeted audience	Choosing the <b>environment</b> in which the testimony is screened and <b>the way</b> in which testimonies are presented to the <b>young visitors</b>	The environment in which the testimony is screened should provide an opportunity to construct <b>broad and</b> <b>complex connections</b> The testimonies should be integrated into the museum space in a way that allows the young visitor to experience the exhibition and the testimonies <b>independently with an investigative</b> <b>orientation</b>
Incorporating testimonies in the museum space and making them accessible to the targeted audience	The testimony relates to the young visitor's <b>prior knowledge</b> that can influence the way in which he/she interprets the testimony	Israeli school children who visit the
Incorporating testimonies in the museum space and making them accessible to the targeted audience	The media allows multiple testimonies in multiple spaces	Presenting the <b>complexity of the</b> <b>Holocaust</b> through multiple testimonies of child survivors at different ages and from different countries should <b>prevent</b> <b>simplification</b> of the Holocaust
The broader connection of the testimony and its relevance to the lives of young visitors	The ways in which the testimony reflects and connects to the museum's message, master narrative, pedagogy	Testimonies must be created and presented in a way that is <b>age</b> <b>appropriate</b> for young visitors and reflects the <b>pedagogical concept</b> of the museum: Holocaust remembrance and understanding the complexity of the event, universal themes, and the <b>relevance to children's lives today</b>
The broader connection of the testimony and its relevance to the lives of young visitors	The reference to subjects that emerge from the testimony can be expanded via <b>various media</b> (via a workshop, play, another exhibition)	The encounter with the story of one child, learning about his/her personal world, family, hobbies, and the ways he/she had to cope, invites the young visitors to <b>expand</b> their <b>knowledge</b> about the world of children who lived during the Holocaust through <b>different</b> <b>educational activities</b>
The broader connection of the testimony and its relevance to the lives of young visitors The broader connection of the testimony and its relevance to the lives of young visitors	The survivor's testimony and unique life experience present an opportunity to broaden the story beyond the Holocaust (an artist, actor, author, doctor, etc) The testimony is presented in a way that stimulates curiosity and further investigation	The video testimony <b>expands</b> <b>knowledge</b> about the survivor and gives their personal experiences a sense of agency through seeing their life before, during and after the Holocaust The museum visit is one of many building blocks in <b>constructing</b> <b>knowledge</b> about the Holocaust and not just a one-off experience

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- 2 Ghetto Fighters' House Archives, History of the Ghetto Fighters' House, Yad LaYeled, Box #241.